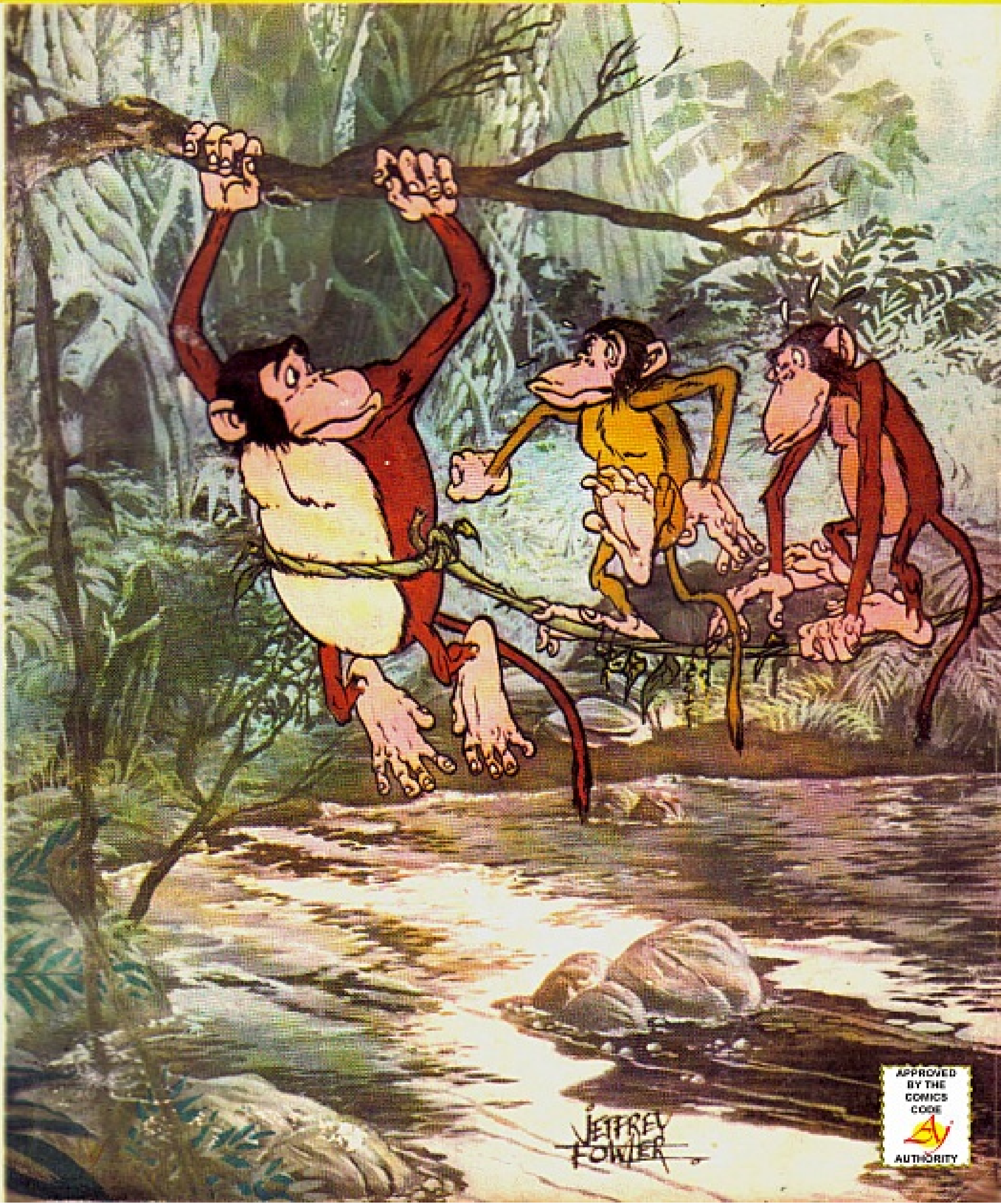
AMAR CHITRA KATHA

No. 45

JATAKA tales
MONKEY STORIES

AMAR CHITRA KATHA



The Jatakas on which the present title is based is a collection of five hundred and fifty stories, included in the Pali canon. They are tales in which the life of Bodhisatva in his previous births is narrated. The Bodhisatva is one, who by performing virtuous, kind and intelligent acts, aspires to become a Buddha.

Jataka tales are based on folklore, legends and ballads of ancient India. We cannot assign a definite date to the Jataka stories. Taking into account archaeological and literary evidence it seems likely that they were compiled in the period, third century B.C. to fifth century A.D. They give us invaluable information about ancient Indian civilization, culture and philosophy.

The Jataka stories have been very popular in the Buddhist world These stories have been translated almost in all the languages of the Buddhist countries such as the Chinese, Tibetan, Sinhalese, Siamese, Burmese, Japanese and also in many modern European languages. These stories have encouraged painting and sculpture in ancient India and other Buddhist countries. Sanchi, Bharhut, Amaravati and Ajanta in India, Borobudur in Java, Pegan in Burma and Sukhodaya in Siam bear testimony to the popularity of these tales.

The present book is a collection of a few Jataka stories in which the Bodhisatva is born as a monkey. We hope, in the words of Prof. Rhys Davids that "we may still turn with appreciation to the ancient book of the Buddhist Jataka tales as a priceless record of the childhood of our race".

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Editor: Anant Pai Written by : Meena Khanna Illustrated by: Jeffrey Fowler


* THE MONKEY KING'S SACRIFICE
FRIENDS! WE HAVE BEEN LIVING HAPPILY ON THIS MANGO TREE FOR YEARS.
BUT I ANTICIPATE TROUBLE, SOON.
WHY MASTER?
MEN HAVE COME TO LIVE NEAR OUR FOREST. THEY HAVE NEVER TASTED THE MANGO FRUIT.
* BASED ON MAHA KAPI JATAKA


ONCE THEY DO, IT WILL BE DANGEROUS FOR US.
OH DEAR! WHAT SHALL WE DO?
MAKE SURE THAT NOT A SINGLE FRUIT FALLS INTO THE RIVER.
PLUCK EACH AND EVERY BUD FROM THE BRANCHES THAT SPREAD OUT OVER THE RIVER.
BUT IN SPITE OF ALL THIS CARE, A JUICY RIPE MANGO FELL INTO THE RIVER...
SPLAT
... AND GOT CAUGHT IN A FISHERMAN'S NET.

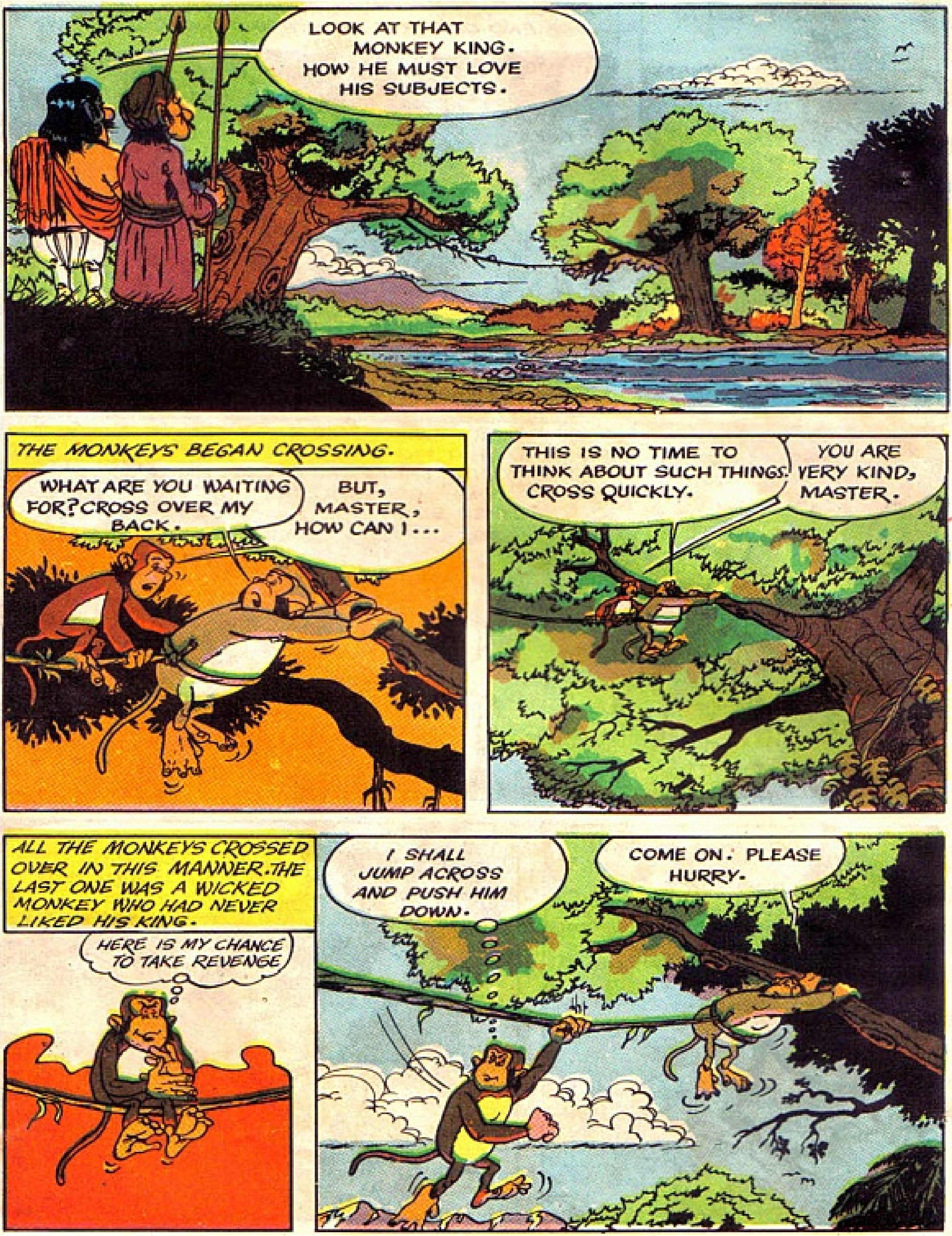

WHEN HE GOT HOME AND BEGAN SORTING OUT THE FISH–
LOOK! SEE WHAT I HAVE FOUND AMONG THE FISH. A STRANGE FRUIT. IT LOOKS DELI-CIOUS!
I HAVE NEVER SEEN A FRUIT LIKE THAT BEFORE.
I THINK WE OUGHT TO TAKE IT TO THE KING.
YES. I THINK I'D BETTER.
SO, ALONG WITH A FRIEND, HE SET OFF FOR THE KING'S PALACE.
THE KING WILL BE OVERJOYED WHEN HE SEES IT.
THEY REACHED THE PALACE LATE THAT NIGHT.
HALT
WE'D LIKE TO SHOW THIS FRUIT TO THE KING.


THEY WERE LET IN.
OH MASTER, THIS FRUIT WAS AMONG THE FISH I CAUGHT.
HM-M-!
SEND FOR THE FORESTER. HE WILL TELL US WHAT FRUIT IT IS.
THAT'S THE RARE MANGO, SIR.
IS IT POISONOUS?
NOT AT ALL, SIR. IN FACT IT IS VERY TASTY.
SO THE KING SUNK HIS TEETH INTO IT.
HM-M-M! DELICIOUS.
IT SMELLS GOOD, TOO!


NEXT MORNING —
TELL ME FORESTER, WHERE DOES THIS MANGO FRUIT GROW.
THERE IS A MANGO GROVE, JUST A LITTLE UPSTREAM, SIR.
MINISTER, MAKE THE NECESSARY ARRANGEMENTS. WE ARE LEAVING FOR THAT GROVE.
YES, SIR.
SOON THEY WERE OFF.
I HOPE YOU HAVE BROUGHT SOME ARCHERS ALONG.
I HAVE, SIR.
WHEN THEY REACHED THE SPOT —
TELL EVERYONE TO EAT AS MUCH AS THEY CAN.
MINISTER, WE WILL STAY HERE FOR A DAY OR TWO.
I WILL MAKE THE ARRANGEMENTS, SIR.


AS NIGHT FELL, THE MONKEYS BEGAN MOVING ABOUT.
MINISTER, WHAT WAS THAT?
JUST MONKEYS SIR, SCAMPERING AMONG THE BRANCHES.
WHEN IT'S MORNING, TELL THE ARCHERS TO SHOOT EVERY SINGLE MONKEY.
I SHALL, SIR.
THE NEXT MORNING—
TODAY ALONG WITH THE MANGOES WE SHALL EAT MONKEY'S FLESH.
OH MASTER, WE'RE TRAPPED.
WHAT ARE WE TO DO NOW?
EYOW
ZIP
DON'T PANIC. I'LL FIND A WAY OUT.
JEFFREY

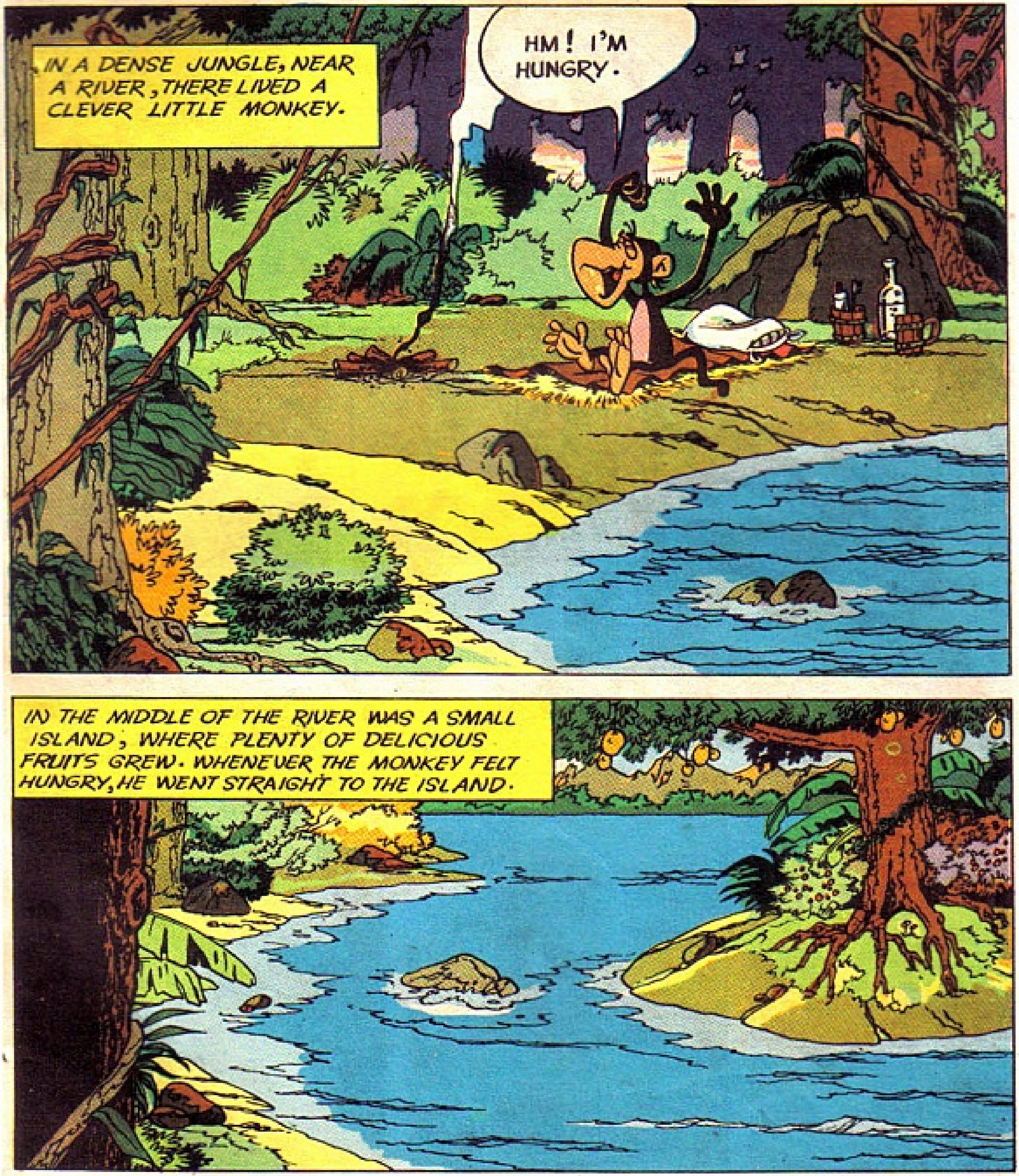

THEY MANAGED TO GET TO A TREE NEAR THE RIVER.
NOW ALL OF YOU DO AS I TELL YOU.
HE GOT HOLD OF A THICK LONG CREEPER. HE TIED ONE END OF IT TO A BRANCH AND THE OTHER TO HIS WAIST.
NOW I WILL SWING OVER THE RIVER TO THAT FIG TREE ON THE OPPOSITE BANK. ONE BYONE YOU CAN COME ACROSS TO THE OTHER SIDE.
OH NO! THE VINE IS TOO SHORT.
I WILL TRY TO GET HOLD OF THIS BRANCH AND BRIDGE THE GAP.


LOOK AT THAT MONKEY KING. HOW HE MUST LOVE HIS SUBJECTS.
THE MONKEYS BEGAN CROSSING.
WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? CROSS OVER MY BACK.
BUT, MASTER, HOW CAN I...
THIS IS NO TIME TO THINK ABOUT SUCH THINGS. CROSS QUICKLY.
YOU ARE VERY KIND, MASTER.
ALL THE MONKEYS CROSSED OVER IN THIS MANNER. THE LAST ONE WAS A WICKED MONKEY WHO HAD NEVER LIKED HIS KING.
HERE IS MY CHANCE TO TAKE REVENGE
I SHALL JUMP ACROSS AND PUSH HIM DOWN.
COME ON. PLEASE HURRY.


I AM TIRED. I CAN BARELY HOLD ON ANY LONGER.
DON'T WORRY. I SHALL SOON GIVE YOU EVER-LASTING PEACE.
THE WICKED MONKEY RUTHLESSLY JUMPED WITH ALL HIS MIGHT ON HIS KING'S BACK.
YE-A-A
HELP!
THE VINE SNAPPED AND DOWN FELL THE MONKEY-KING.
YEEOOOO
SNAP
HE FELL ON A ROCK AND BROKE HIS JAW.
THUD
GROAN
ON THE OTHER BANK, THE KING WAS WATCHING.
COME ON. LET US HELP THE POOR FELLOW.

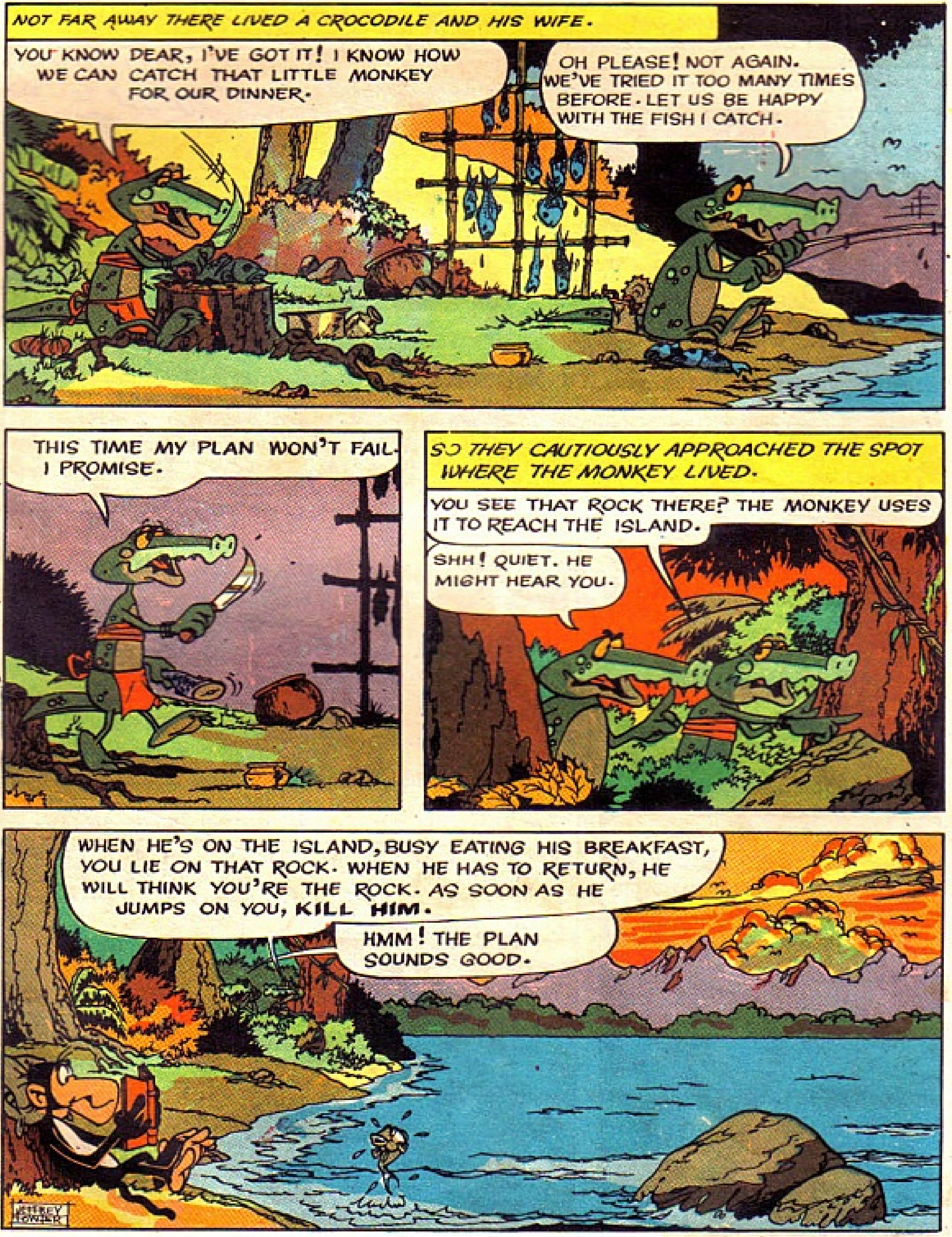

WHEN THEY GOT TO THE OTHER SIDE —
YOU SAVED THEM AT THE COST OF YOUR OWN LIFE!
I DON'T MIND. I HAVE DONE MY DUTY.
LET ME TAKE YOU BACK AND LOOK AFTER YOU.
NO. PLEASE LEAVE ME HERE. I AM ABOUT TO DIE.
NOBLE SOUL! HOW PAINFUL IT MUST ALL BE.
I DON'T MIND THE PAIN. I AM HAPPY THAT MY SUBJECTS ARE SAFE.
the End.

•THE STUPID CROCODILE AND THE MONKEY

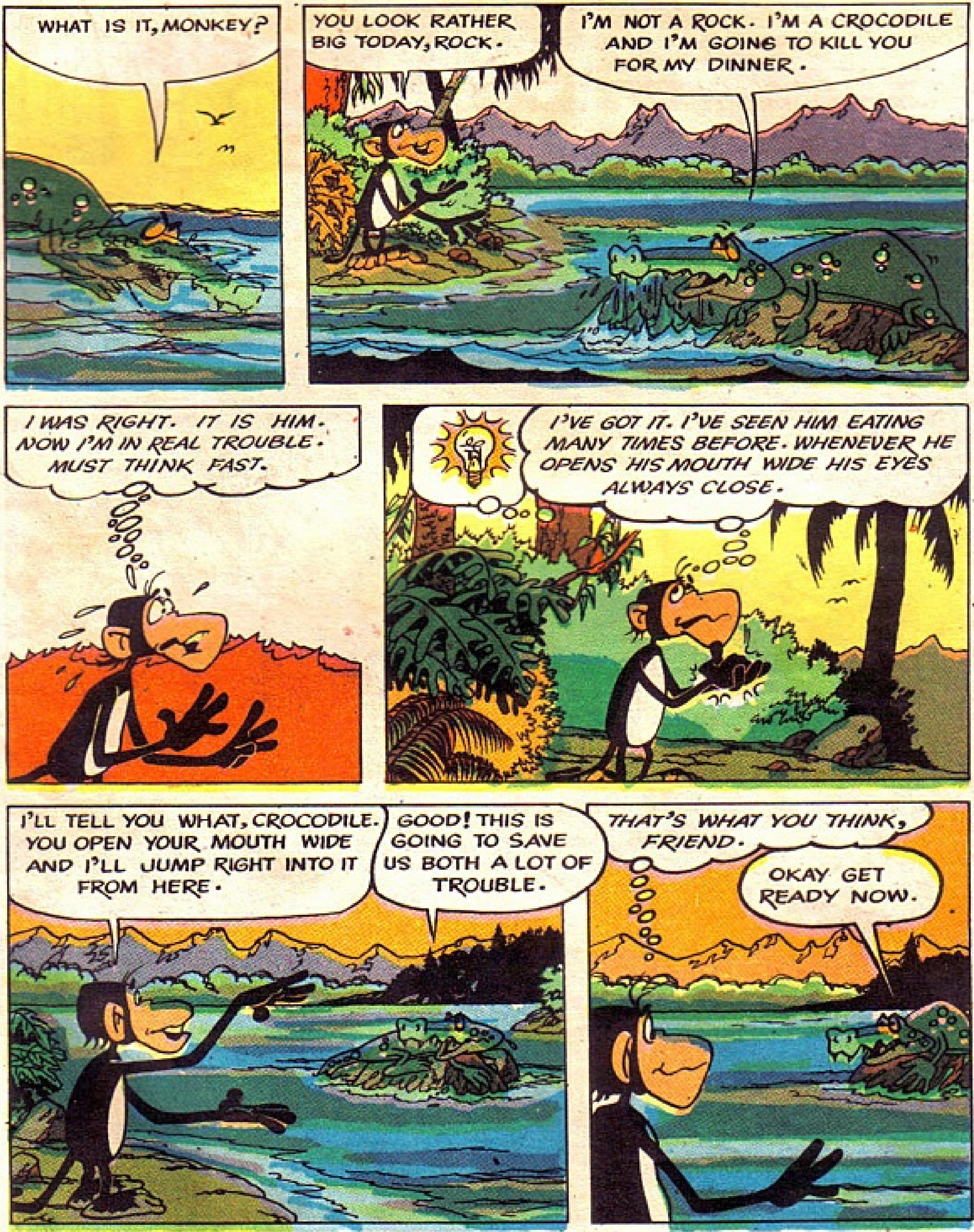


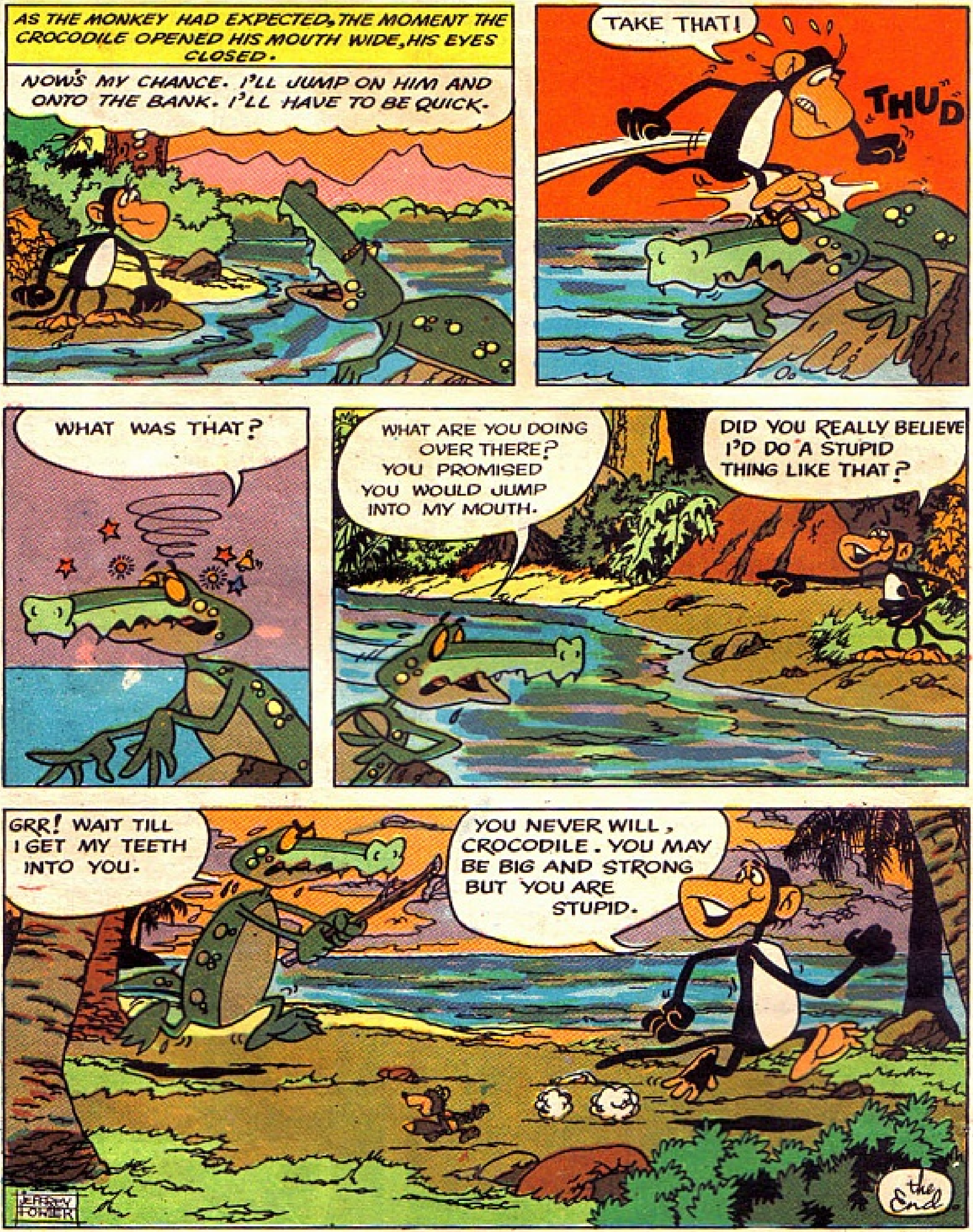
* BASED ON VANARINDA JATAKA


HE WOULD JUMP FROM THE BANK, ONTO A ROCK IN THE RIVER AND THEN TO THE SMALL ISLAND.
BREAKFAST. HERE I COME!
HMM! NOTHING LIKE FRUIT FOR A HEALTHY BREAKFAST.
HUH... ?
PUCH
ROTTEN FRUIT!
I WONDER WHERE IT CAME FROM.
PUCH
OH WELL! ONE MUST TAKE THE GOOD WITH THE BAD!


NOT FAR AWAY THERE LIVED A CROCODILE AND HIS WIFE.
YOU KNOW DEAR, I'VE GOT IT! I KNOW HOW WE CAN CATCH THAT LITTLE MONKEY FOR OUR DINNER.
OH PLEASE! NOT AGAIN. WE'VE TRIED IT TOO MANY TIMES BEFORE. LET US BE HAPPY WITH THE FISH I CATCH.
THIS TIME MY PLAN WON'T FAIL. I PROMISE.
SO THEY CAUTIOUSLY APPROACHED THE SPOT WHERE THE MONKEY LIVED.
YOU SEE THAT ROCK THERE? THE MONKEY USES IT TO REACH THE ISLAND.
SHH! QUIET. HE MIGHT HEAR YOU.
WHEN HE'S ON THE ISLAND, BUSY EATING HIS BREAKFAST, YOU LIE ON THAT ROCK. WHEN HE HAS TO RETURN, HE WILL THINK YOU'RE THE ROCK. AS SOON AS HE JUMPS ON YOU, KILL HIM.
HMM! THE PLAN SOUNDS GOOD.


THE NEXT DAY AS USUAL THE MONKEY SET OUT FOR THE ISLAND.
I'M HUNGRY!
SO AM I! HEE!HEE!
WHEN HE HAD EATEN TO HIS STOMACH'S CONTENT—
HEY! THAT'S STRANGE! THAT ROCK LOOKS BIGGER TODAY.
THE RIVER HAS NOT GONE DRY FOR IT TO LOOK BIGGER.
I'M SURE IT IS THAT STUPID CROCODILE, UP TO HIS TRICKS AGAIN. I WON'T JUMP TILL I'M SURE.
LET ME SEE IF THIS IDEA WORKS.
HELLO ROCK! HOW ARE YOU TODAY, MY FRIEND?
THE MONKEY CALLED OVER AND OVER AGAIN.
WHY AREN'T YOU SPEAKING TO ME TODAY ROCK? HAVE I ANNOYED YOU?
IT LOOKS AS IF THIS ROCK USED TO TALK TO HIM. I'D BETTER REPLY.
?


WHAT IS IT, MONKEY?
YOU LOOK RATHER BIG TODAY, ROCK.
I'M NOT A ROCK. I'M A CROCODILE AND I'M GOING TO KILL YOU FOR MY DINNER.
I WAS RIGHT. IT IS HIM. NOW I'M IN REAL TROUBLE. MUST THINK FAST.
I'VE GOT IT. I'VE SEEN HIM EATING MANY TIMES BEFORE. WHENEVER HE OPENS HIS MOUTH WIDE HIS EYES ALWAYS CLOSE.
I'LL TELL YOU WHAT, CROCODILE. YOU OPEN YOUR MOUTH WIDE AND I'LL JUMP RIGHT INTO IT FROM HERE.
GOOD! THIS IS GOING TO SAVE US BOTH A LOT OF TROUBLE.
THAT'S WHAT YOU THINK, FRIEND.
OKAY GET READY NOW.


AS THE MONKEY HAD EXPECTED, THE MOMENT THE CROCODILE OPENED HIS MOUTH WIDE, HIS EYES CLOSED.
NOW'S MY CHANCE. I'LL JUMP ON HIM AND ONTO THE BANK. I'LL HAVE TO BE QUICK.
TAKE THAT!
THUD
WHAT WAS THAT?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING OVER THERE? YOU PROMISED YOU WOULD JUMP INTO MY MOUTH.
DID YOU REALLY BELIEVE I'D DO A STUPID THING LIKE THAT?
GRR! WAIT TILL I GET MY TEETH INTO YOU.
YOU NEVER WILL, CROCODILE. YOU MAY BE BIG AND STRONG BUT YOU ARE STUPID.
the End



★ BASED ON NALAPANA JATAKA


YOU MUST NOT DRINK WATER OR EAT ANY FRUIT WITHOUT ASKING ME.
ONE DAY WHILE SEARCHING FOR FIREWOOD, THE MONKEYS WANDERED DEEP INTO THE FOREST.
MOTHER, I'M THIRSTY.
AH! THERE IS A LAKE CLOSE BY.
WAIT! DON'T GO NEAR THE WATER.
DON'T YOU REMEMBER OUR LEADER'S WARNING?
OH DEAR! I'D COMPLETELY FORGOTTEN. THANK YOU FOR REMINDING ME.
ALL RIGHT! LET US WAIT TILL OUR LEADER COMES.

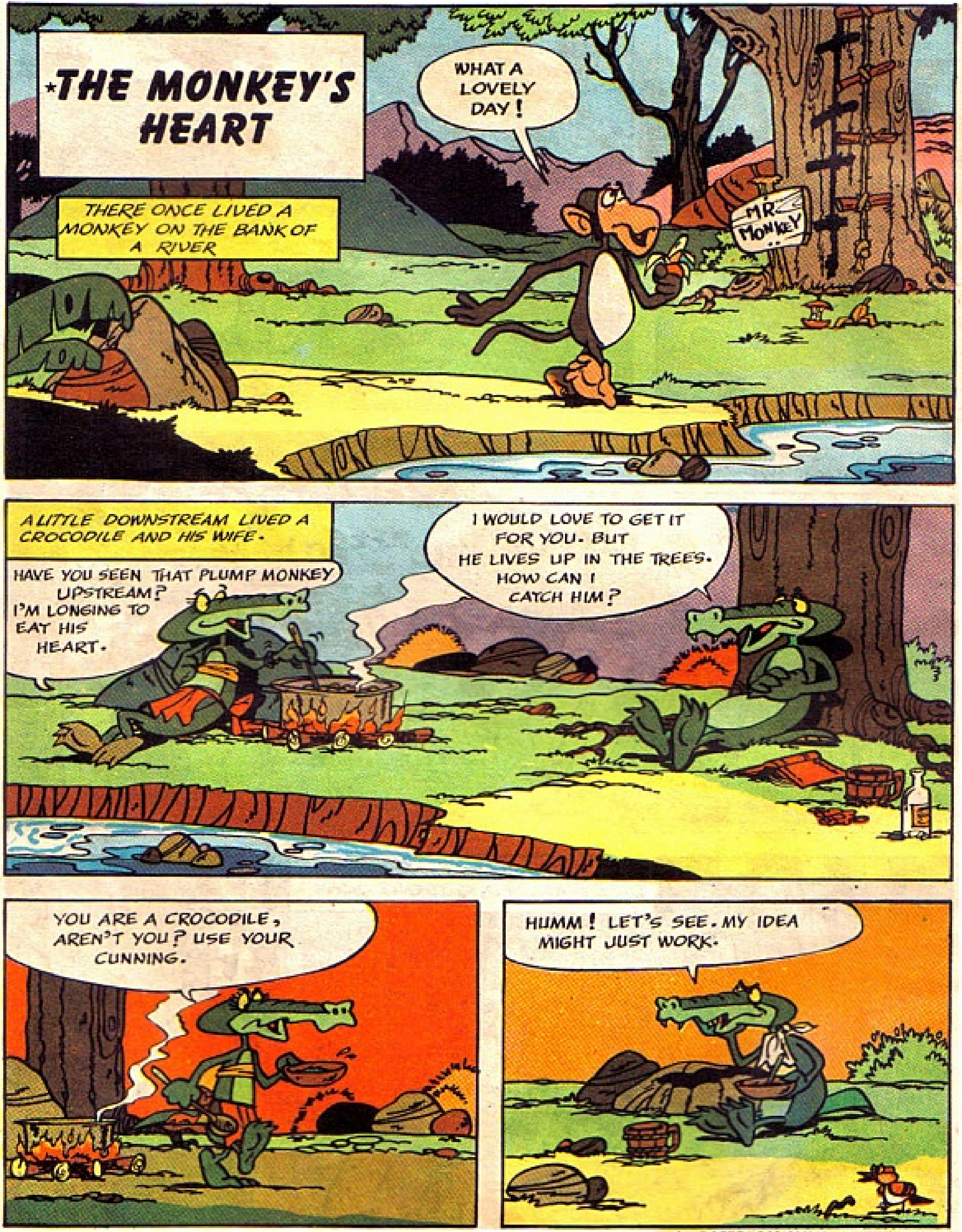

A LITTLE LATER—
AH! HERE HE IS.
WHAT'S THE MATTER? YOU SEEM TO HAVE A PROBLEM.
MASTER, WE ARE VERY THIRSTY.
WE ARE WAITING FOR YOU TO LET US KNOW IF THIS LAKE IS SAFE.
THAT WAS VERY WISE OF YOU. NOW LET ME EXAMINE THE LAKE.
HMM! ALL THE FOOTSTEPS LEAD INTO THE LAKE.
BUT NOT A SINGLE ONE LEADS OUT OF IT.


AS SOON AS HE RETURNED—
MASTER IS IT SAFE?
NO! THIS LAKE IS HAUNTED.
I'M VERY THIRSTY. I MUST HAVE SOME WATER.
OH DEAR! WHAT SHALL WE DO?
HM...M. LET ME THINK IN PEACE.
SUDDENLY—
WHA...
WHAT ARE YOU DOING NEAR MY LAKE?
ARE YOU THE DEMON OF THIS LAKE?
YES! AND I EAT ALL THOSE WHO DARE ENTER MY LAKE.

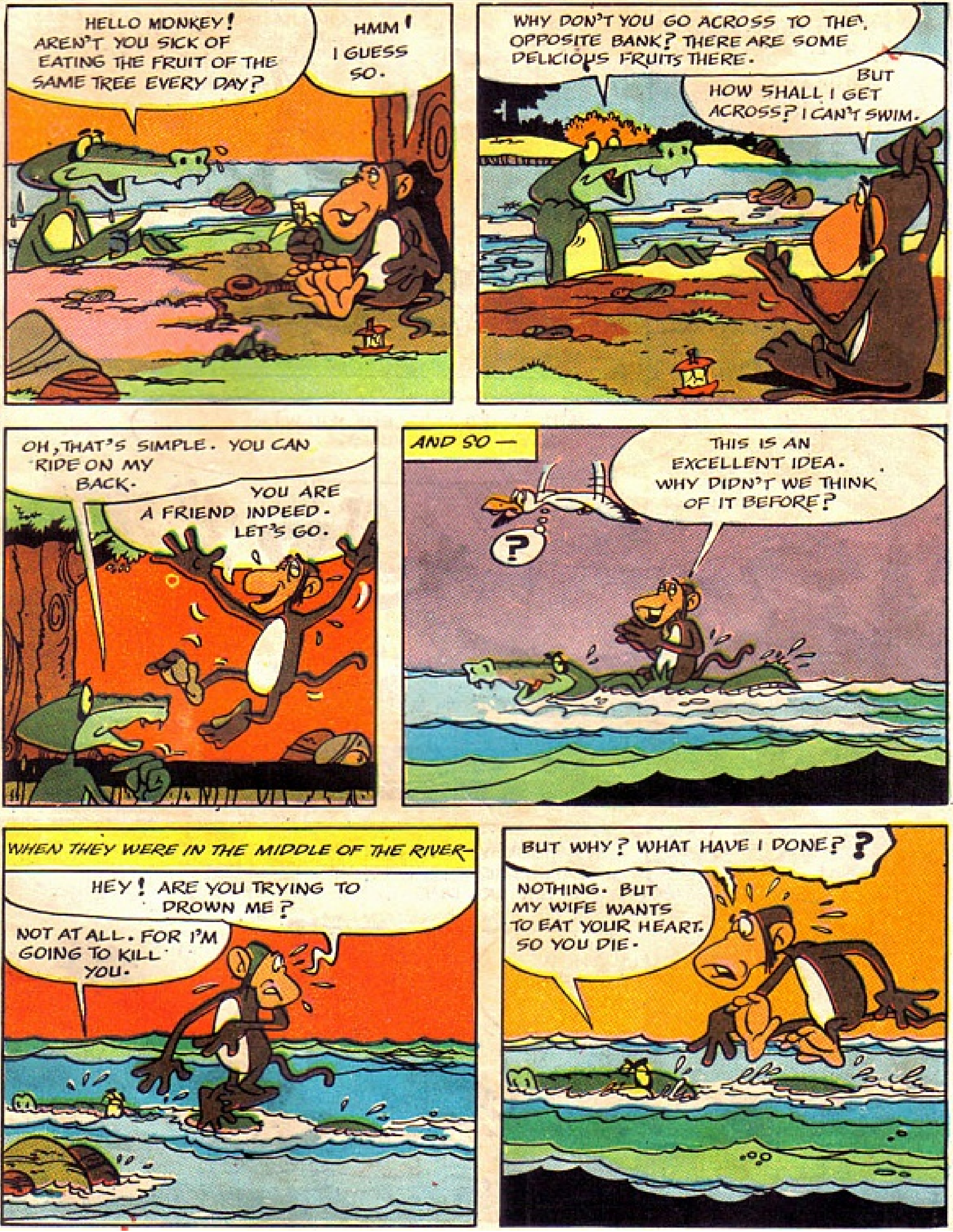

?
IN THAT CASE WE WILL NOT ENTER THE LAKE.
AND LET YOUR HERD DIE OF THIRST?
JEFFREY FOWLER
OH NO! WE WONT DIE. WE WILL DRINK THE WATER FROM YOUR LAKE.
WHAT??
YES WE WILL. WITHOUT ENTERING IT.
AND HOW MAY I ASK?
WAIT AND SEE.
??!
COME ON, BOYS. FOLLOW ME.


COLLECT ALL THE BAMBOO REEDS YOU CAN.
HM..M...M... THIS ONE'S FINE. ABSOLUTELY HOLLOW.
WHAT ABOUT THIS ONE?
EXCELLENT. IT FITS INTO THE OTHER PERFECTLY.
THUS BY JOINING A NUMBER OF THE REEDS TOGETHER THE LEADER MADE ONE LONG HOLLOW REED..
NOW I'LL SLIDE THAT END INTO THE WATER.
NOW WHAT?
I'LL SUCK THE WATER FROM THIS END.
AND WITH ALL HIS MIGHT HE SUCKED AT THE REED TILL...
SKURRRRR


...THE WATER GUSHED OUT IN A THICK STREAM.
SPLAT
WATER! DELICIOUS WATER! AND ALL FOR US.
FULL OF RAGE, THE OUTWITTED DEMON STOMPED BACK INTO THE LAKE.
GRRRR!
HA HA HA HA HO HO HEE HO HAHA
AND THE MONKEYS THEIR THIRST WELL QUENCHED, RETURNED HOME.
the End

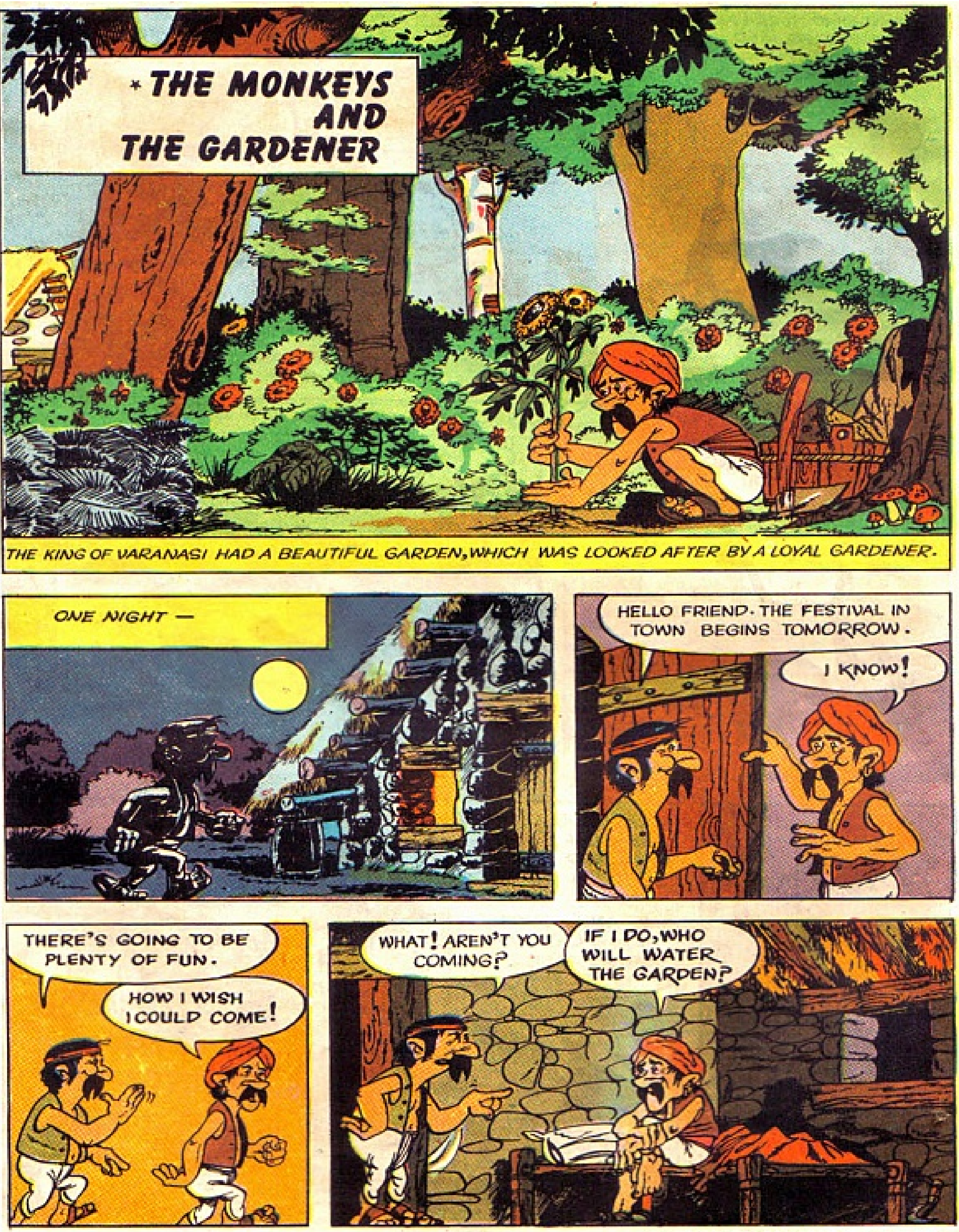


★ BASED ON SUMSUMARA JATAKA


HELLO MONKEY! AREN'T YOU SICK OF EATING THE FRUIT OF THE SAME TREE EVERY DAY?
HMM! I GUESS SO.
WHY DON'T YOU GO ACROSS TO THE OPPOSITE BANK? THERE ARE SOME DELICIOUS FRUITS THERE.
BUT HOW SHALL I GET ACROSS? I CAN'T SWIM.
OH, THAT'S SIMPLE. YOU CAN RIDE ON MY BACK.
YOU ARE A FRIEND INDEED. LET'S GO.
AND SO—
THIS IS AN EXCELLENT IDEA. WHY DIDN'T WE THINK OF IT BEFORE?
?
WHEN THEY WERE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE RIVER—
HEY! ARE YOU TRYING TO DROWN ME?
NOT AT ALL. FOR I'M GOING TO KILL YOU.
BUT WHY? WHAT HAVE I DONE??
NOTHING. BUT MY WIFE WANTS TO EAT YOUR HEART. SO YOU DIE.


I'D BETTER THINK FAST IF I LOVE MY LIFE.
HA! HA! HA! HO! HO! HEE! HEEE! THE JOKE'S ON YOU, CROCODILE.
STOP THAT. WHAT'S SO FUNNY ABOUT DYING?
CLACK
YOU MAY KILL ME. BUT YOU WILL NEVER GET MY HEART.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
WE MONKEYS HIDE OUR HEARTS IN SAFE PLACES BEFORE WE VENTURE OUT.
REALLY? HOW WAS I TO KNOW?


NEVER MIND. TURN BACK. SINCE YOU WERE SO KIND TO ME I'LL SHOW YOU WHERE MY HEART IS.
?
THERE. CAN YOU SEE THAT TALL BIG TREE ON THE BANK WHERE I LIVE ?
OF COURSE, I CAN.
I HIDE IT IN THE TOPMOST BRANCH OF THAT TREE. TAKE ME BACK AND I'LL GIVE IT TO YOU.
YOU WILL ?
AS SOON AS THEY REACHED THE BANK—
NOW I'D BETTER ACT FAST.
YOU POOR FOOL. IF MY HEART WERE REMOVED FROM MY BODY I'D BE DEAD. IT'S SAFE INSIDE ME AND YOU'LL NEVER LAY YOUR HANDS ON IT.
the End.



* BASED ON ARMADUSAKA JATAKA


THE NEXT DAY–
WHY DO YOU LOOK SO SAD, GARDENER?
THERE'S A FESTIVAL ON IN TOWN.
WELL?
I WANT TO GO TO IT. BUT WHO WILL WATER MY GARDEN?
POOH! THAT'S NO PROBLEM.
MY FRIENDS AND I WILL WATER THE GARDEN FOR YOU.
YOU WILL?
THANK YOU, DEAR MONKEY. I'LL RETURN IN A FEW DAYS, AS SOON AS POSSIBLE
HAVE A FINE TIME, FRIEND.
NOW TO ROUND UP ALL MY FRIENDS!


COME ON, MY MONKEYS. WE HAVE WORK TO DO. VERY IMPORTANT WORK!
WHAT IS IT? WHAT DO WE HAVE TO DO?
THE GARDENER WANTS US TO WATER HIS GARDEN WHILE HE IS AWAY.
WHAT FUN!
WHEN CAN WE START?
RIGHT AWAY! GO GET THE WATERING CANS AND BUCKETS.
AS SOON AS THEY WERE READY—
SOME TREES ARE SMALL AND SOME ARE BIG!
THAT'S RIGHT! HOW MUCH WATER SHOULD WE GIVE TO EACH TREE?
THAT'S NO PROBLEM AT ALL.


ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS PULL UP EACH PLANT AND HAVE A LOOK AT THE SIZE OF ITS ROOTS.
AND THEN?
YOU POUR LESS FOR THE SMALLER ROOTS AND MORE FOR THE BIGGER ROOTS.
YOU ARE REALLY CLEVER.
WHAT A WONDERFUL IDEA.
OH, IT WAS QUITE SIMPLE REALLY.
AND SO THEY BEGAN UPROOTING ALL THE PLANTS.


MEANWHILE IN TOWN —
I WONDER HOW MY MONKEY FRIENDSARE GETTING ALONG WITH THEIR TASK?
TWO DAYS LATER THE GARDENER RETURNED HOME.
?
WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?
WE WATERED EACH PLANT ACCORDING TO THE NEEDS OF ITS ROOTS
THAT'S RIG T. WE DID.
WHATEVER, SHALL I DO NOW? WHAT SHALL I TELL THE KING?
THAT'S WHAT COMES OF DEPENDING ON A FOOL. HE MAY MEAN WELL BUT WILL END UP DOING MORE HARM THAN ANYTHING ELSE.
the End



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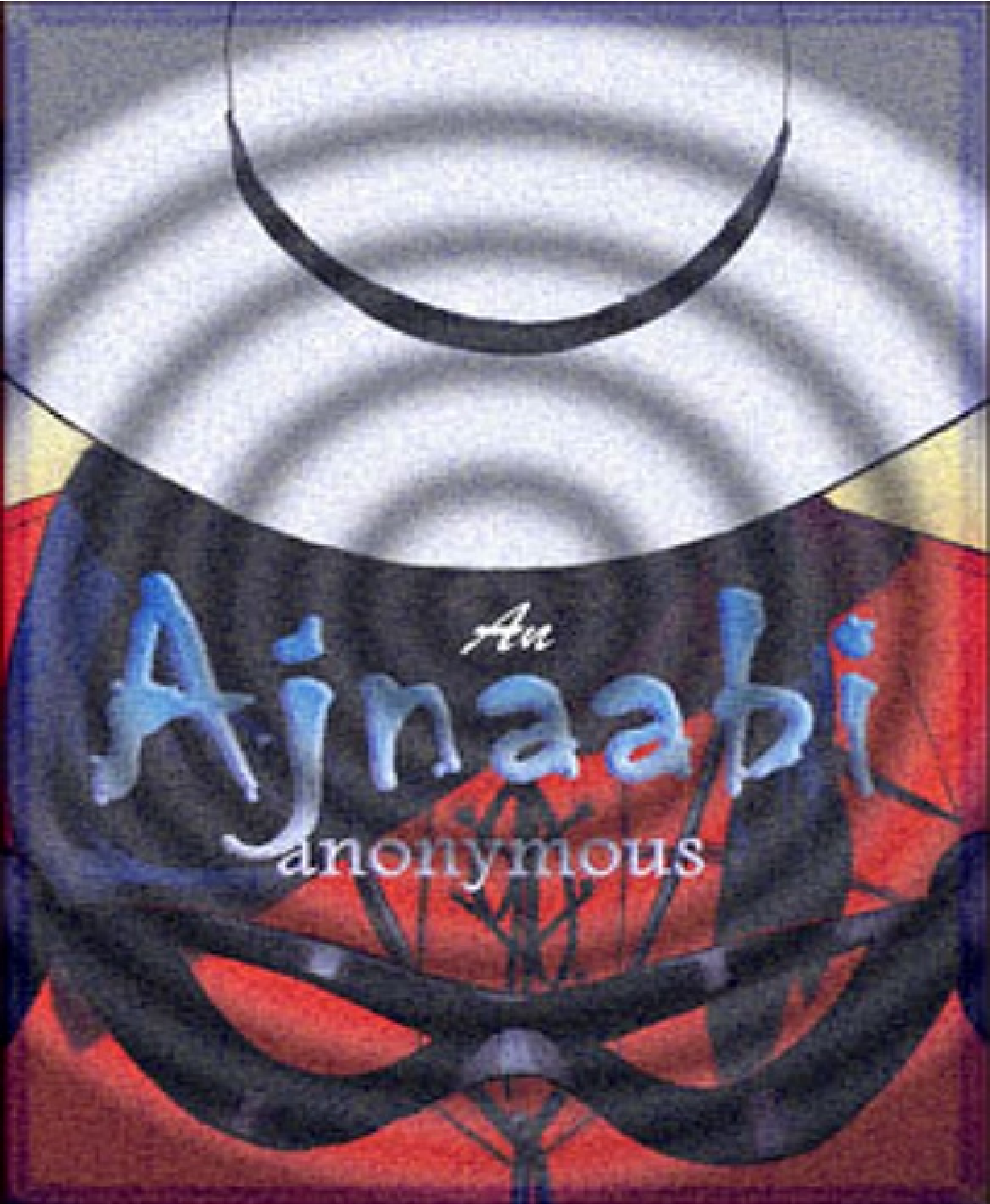
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